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Certificate of Approval

**Investigating Digital Publishing Trends Within the Consumer Magazine Industry**

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of  
Sarah E. Lawrence  
has been approved by the Thesis Committee as satisfactory  
for the Thesis requirement for the Master of Science degree  
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# **Investigating Digital Publishing Trends within the Consumer Magazine Industry**

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Science in Print Media in the School of Media Sciences  
in the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
of the Rochester Institute of Technology

June 2014

Primary Thesis Advisor: Dr. Barbara Birkett  
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### **Abstract**

The introduction of the tablet is changing the consumer magazine industry. This research investigates new and developing trends within digital publishing, specifically the addition of a digital edition published on the Apple iPad. The industry is currently lacking consensus regarding digital strategy to implement these editions. This research aims to identify any existing trends, or lack thereof, through survey and interview responses. Firstly, sample magazines were analyzed to determine topics for examination in a survey and subsequent interview. Secondly, a survey was designed and conducted. The survey sample consisted of creative management of consumer magazines currently offered in Apple Newsstand. Thirdly, a series of interview questions was sent out to willing participants.

## Glossary

*Magazine Blog:* A blog kept by a magazine or publishing company. Typically involves almost daily posts and content that are not within the primary publication.

*Tablet:* A portable device larger than a phone that runs an operating system similar to that of a desktop or laptop computer such as Android or iOS. Usually featuring large touch screens and minimal buttons, these devices are capable of internet usage and run applications ('apps') that serve a variety of purposes.

*Digital Subscription:* A subscription purchased or obtained by a user that allows for the monthly delivery of content in the form of a digital magazine.

*Digital Publication:* Content that is delivered electronically in a series of pages that can be navigated manually or through a table of contents. This content can be delivered through a third-party app such as iBooks or GooglePlay but can also be provided as an individual app. Content may or may not be the same as the printed edition.

*Interactive Publication:* Interactive connotes more than just hyperlinks and turning pages; it includes new and/or enriched content such as video, scrolling text frames, music, or the many ways a user can 'touch' and therefore 'interact' with a digital publication.

*eReader:* A portable device larger than a phone that has similar capabilities to a tablet but runs an abridged or specialized version of the operating system. May or may not have a color screen, apps or internet capability.

*eBook:* Almost always black and white, developed specifically for reading software like Kindle or Nook. Features live text, resizing options as well as specific interactive elements including annotations and bookmarks.

*ePub:* Typically a specific file format, as in .epub, of an eBook. Not currently supported by Amazon.

*Multiplatform:* Content that is published or developed for more than one media platform.

*Tablet-like Device:* Closer to a tablet, but between a tablet and an eReader. Usually featuring a color screen and the ability to use the internet and run apps, but does not have the same operating system or processing capabilities as a tablet.

## **Glossary Continued**

*Web Magazine:* A magazine published through proprietary software like Issuu, usually featuring an interface that mimics the literal reading of a magazine including flipping pages.

*Business to Business:* (B to B) Magazines that are specifically geared for business interactions, such as trade magazines.

*Business to Consumer:* (Consumer) Magazines that are published for the average consumer. Usually has a niche genre like fashion or cars.

*Storefront:* When purchasing an app in Newsstand, a user is taken to a landing page with purchasing information. This page is somewhat customizable, depending on the software used to publish the magazine.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of the Problem**

This research investigates how successful media companies have changed the way they distribute content, namely through the addition of a tablet edition. The relatively recent arrival of tablet devices on the market, the increased presence of smart mobile devices and the ability to be more consistently online all contribute to the increasing popularity of tablet editions of printed magazines. There is currently, however, a lack of an industry consensus around how to 1) structure digital publications and 2) form strategies to implement a digital magazine. While companies may be turning a profit from their digital publications, it is difficult to determine whether profit is a result of effective publications or whether simply the results of offering readers the option to read the content digitally. Are readers influenced by the amount of interactivity within a digital magazine? What steps are companies taking to implement their digital magazines? Questions arise such as how they: decide on content, add additional content, determine subscription policies or integrate other media channels?

According to a study done by CDS Global (2013), nearly half of the media industry has developed at least one iPad app, and digital revenue is growing for consumer publishers (see Glossary). However, there is little industry agreement regarding business models for designing and implementing these new publications.

### **Media Channels**

There are four separate channels that apply most directly to the magazine: print, mobile, social media and web. All four are capable of integrating with each other, and

each channel provides unique opportunities to increase readership and profit. These opportunities can be exploited further when using the channels in tandem; however, these same opportunities can pose problems when dealing with content delivery.

Defined below are the four primary media channels over which it is possible to distribute content as they pertain to the magazine publishing industry.

### *Print*

Print, in this research, refers to any printed publication, either on a subscription or on an *a la carte* basis that can be purchased by or offered to a consumer, such as via a newsstand purchase. Specifically, this research deals with magazines; however, it is not limited to those issues received at home, but includes any that can be purchased by the consumer as individual issues.

### *Mobile*

For the purposes of this paper, mobile refers to devices that are less robust in their processing power than a laptop or netbook, or run something other than the full operating system. Mobile includes smartphones, messaging phones, tablets, and anything in between (e.g., Zune, iTouch).

### *Social Media*

Social Media has broadened in the last few years to include a variety of niche specialties. Within the spectrum of this research, social media includes any online presence that connects users in a specific communicative fashion. These forms of communication can include subscribing, following, and a multitude of other actions associated with specific forms of social media (e.g., “checking in” on Foursquare, or “liking” on Facebook).

## *Web*

Although the online presence and website can be viewed on many different devices, “web” in this case means the website parked at a domain. For an example, any content hosted via a URL, (e.g., “http://www....”) would be considered a website, and therefore part of the “web.” This does not include apps for web services, such as a Pinterest app, and may not include a mobile specific version of a website where content has been re-arranged or sized for mobile screens.

## **Problem**

According to a recent study conducted by CDS Global (a Hearst company), while more and more companies are reporting increased revenue from their digital content, very few feel that their digital strategy is fully developed (2013). Publishers are implementing digital magazines without confidence in a firm digital strategy. It is therefore difficult to develop a methodology or workflow technique for how these publications can adapt to new software, hardware, and media. “Despite the incredible pace of change in the last few years, the magazine in the digital age remains a work in progress” (Johnson, 2013).

This research focused on the decision to add a digital magazine, specifically those designed for tablets. This decision included taking the other channels into consideration as a part of the whole, or part of the brand. Brand, for the purposes of this research, indicates not only a publisher but also any services or goods that a company might “sell,” including, but not limited to, publication, merchandise, community involvement, and education. Content, for the purposes of this research, includes not only static text, articles and pictures, but also interactive content (e.g., videos, slideshows, animations).

As tablets are a relatively new technology, the addition of a tablet edition is not likely to be entirely seamless. Concerns surrounding transition from print to digital raises issues such as:

- What content is being published?
  - On what platform?
  - When and how often?
- How does all of the content relate back to the parent brand?
- How is a “successful” digital magazine defined?
- What are the steps for a successful digital strategy?

### **Reasons for Interest**

Digital publishing has been a part of the researcher’s life since 2004. During coursework both in undergraduate work and graduate work it became apparent that there is a lack of research surrounding the successes and failures of digital publishing.

Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology (R.I.T.) have provided the researcher with a unique vantage point of the industry and the resources to pursue this exploration into a digital strategy for magazines which includes digital publishing, asset management, and workflow analysis. This background relates specifically to the way that content is being developed and implemented for new digital magazines and will aid significantly in the analysis section of this research.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

This literature review first presents a brief overview of the turbulent first two years of the tablet industry. This industry has been possibly the largest factor influencing the digital magazine marketplace, and therefore is the most relevant to discuss. Adobe released statistics from their digital publishing services revealing that 75% of users read those publications on tablets while only 25% use their mobile devices (Yang, 2013). Various issues surrounding the magazine market, particularly those most prevalent in the transition to digital subscriptions, are outlined and briefly defined. These are all issues that factor heavily into the analysis conducted within the course of this research.

### **Tablet History**

The Apple iPad was announced January, 2010, and released in the spring of the same year. Other tablets soon followed featuring the Android and Windows operating systems (OS). This technology followed the success of the Kindle eReader from Amazon, first released in late 2007.

From a technical standpoint, the biggest difference between a designated eReader and a tablet is the operating system. Tablets such as the Kindle, or the Nook (by Barnes and Noble), are black-and-white devices that, while capable of tasks like internet browsing, are ill-suited for anything but reading text and viewing basic black-and-white images. As the popularity in tablets and eReaders spiked, there arose a market for a hybrid device such as the Kindle Fire and Nook HD. These new devices have nearly the same computing capabilities as a tablet, but still do not run full versions of any OS



(iOS, Android, Windows, etc.) At the time of this thesis (May 2014), there are over eight models of Kindle and four Nooks to choose from, varying in device capabilities such as: size, price, internet access, and storage capacity.

The tablet market is expanding rapidly. As of the publication of this document, the Microsoft “Surface” tablet is only on its second iteration, the “Surface 2,” released in late 2013. It is the first tablet with the Windows operating system, released over a year and a half after the Apple iPad, which is now on its 4th generation. New models of tablets are released to keep up with technological developments such as faster processors, improvements in display (Apple Retina display, Kindle Paperwhite & HD models), size (iPad Mini), weight and memory capability. Android OS, once a distant second in the Apps Marketplace, is gaining rapidly in app and device sales. Increased sales, in turn, drive diversity of available apps.

## **Digital Magazines**

There are varying definitions of what a digital magazine actually is (or is not). One of the reasons this research is significant is that there are discrepancies in usage within the industry. To simply state “digital publication” is to provide the audience with an umbrella term that is not specific enough. To provide clarification, the researcher compiled a list of terminology with definitions and spelling decisions that will remain consistent within the research (see Glossary, page ix). Santos Silva (2011) provides a list of various digital publications; they are: digital magazines not based in a print version, digital-only magazines, “app” versions of magazines (iOS, etc.), PDF replicas, and e-Reader apps (Kindle, etc.). Further, the BPA [no acronym definition] has defined sub-terms for types of digital magazines, and this vocabulary (see Appendix B) will be used for the research (2013).

### *State of the Magazine Publishing Industry*

In general, publishers, despite some change in the last few years, have been relatively slow to join the online revolution in a formal and organized way. Alan Mutter (2013), a technical consultant for media companies, writes in regard to newspapers' foray into the digital realm, "This inquiry [What should my digital strategy be?] is alarming on a number of levels. First, because it has taken nearly two decades after the commercial arrival of the Internet for many newspaper executives to seriously tackle the seminal existential question facing their business." The rest of the article is a somewhat vague collection of general sounding advice to evaluate the situation, do research, accept failure and develop "a well-conceived marketing and sales plan."

Realistically, the industry is seeing a lesser focus on the "how" and a greater focus on the "what." Magazines have been able to adapt quickly to the digital, and as a result, readership is relatively steady. Even before the advent of the tablet, magazine publishers were eager to recognize the potential in digital content (Galarneau, 2009).

In 2009, Roger Neal, Senior Vice President of BusinessWeek.com happily reported that the website accounted for 20% of the total revenue, and that the online audience was measured at ten times that of print (Galarneau, 2009). The issue becomes then monetizing that content and gaining profit from such large viewership. The early 2013 Printing Industries of America report also includes an article about newspapers, noting a large increase in newspapers' digital subscription profit, citing Gannett Co. as an example (Moozakis, 2013). These profits include "paywalls," wherein a user can access only a certain amount of free content before having to pay some amount for additional content. "Paywalls" are a challenge for journalists in every field, since so much of that content is typically available in replica form for free elsewhere online. Similarly, CDS reports that profit from digital activities (including web, in this case) are up from 75% in 2012 to 80% in 2013 (2013).

Magazine publishing has been able to remain relatively constant in the face of print decline. Hearst was able to report in 2009 that they had a boost in web subscriptions - all of this before the release of the iPad (Galarneau, 2009).

The problems with digital and online content can be fairly universal. The dichotomy of “more” and “free” mixed with “profit” and “quality” can be a tricky one to navigate. Jacob (2011) makes astute note of this when researching just how much free content can affect a reader’s likelihood of paying for content if it is already available in some form (replicated directly or provided by another source), for free, online.

### **Generational Trends**

In light of dealing with a new technology, the market for eReaders and tablets has a distinct generational appeal. However, current data from Bain Group for eReaders show a trend for certain age groups that might be considered unexpected, but also indicate that this new technology can be relevant to all ages. These statistics have already shown that even Generation Y (those born early 80’s to late 90’s) and Digital Natives (those who grew up with computers) are still attached to print versions (Behare, 2011). Arguments for accessibility and price are likely to be greater influences on whether or not the printed versions will remain popular.

The Bain Company provides some very concise data insight into the “readership” quandary. Out of over 3,000 of their survey respondents in several countries, just under half stated the paper experience as their primary barrier to the tablet/eReader market (Behare, 2011). The tactile nature of paper is still important to readers. Additionally, the Printing Industries of America recently published statistics that show 70% of Americans, including the hotly sought-after 18-24 age (Digital Natives) range, still prefer to read paper and print rather than digitally delivered content (Defino, 2013). There are, however, some differences to be noted regarding a digital publication. Bourne (2011) makes an

observation that digital content must, by nature, provide a different reading experience because of its interactivity.

### **Rise of Digital Content**

As aforementioned, magazines have been exploring the digital realm successfully even before the introduction of eReaders and Tablets to the marketplace with web presences. Thus, the content of a publication will become increasingly more important if they intend to succeed beyond current web generated revenue. MaryAnn Bekkedahl of Rodale Publishing reports of their own paid site success, “It is the content intellectual property at the core that makes [paid sites] different from other publishers out there” (Galarneau, 2009).

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) can be considered an early adopter of online technology, first moving their content online in 1996. Obviously, the implementation of content has transitioned since then, but ACM highlights an important distinction: “The goal of each format is to give users the content they want, where, when, and how they want it” (Roman, 2011).

All of this means that magazines and other publications are being forced to truly examine their brand across platforms, “...making sure each new idea stays true to the mission of the brand is critical.” (Johnson, 2013) It will not be enough to publish a .pdf copy of the magazine to a digital service like iOS Newsstand. As digital content becomes more prolific and interactive content better utilized, users are going to start expecting interactive content when not viewing print. Some magazines have already embraced this change with cross-promotional “storefronts” (see Glossary), shops, integrated marketing, interactive content, and it is this cohesion of media and content that surpasses a simple digital transition and is then a more comprehensive digital experience for the user.

## **Production in the Digital Realm**

There needs to be an important distinction made between an interactive and a replica edition of a magazine. Technically speaking, a replica magazine is one that would have been sent to print as-is but is instead read on a screen. There may be hyperlinks, but other than turning pages there is no interactivity for the user. An interactive magazine, however, includes additional content and interactivity such as videos, 3-D models, forms, slideshows, sound clips, etc.

“U.K. auto magazine *Top Gear* experienced a growth in readership in just three months after switching to DPS [Digital Publishing Suite] from a PDF replica digital edition” (Yang, 2013). This statistic, published in *Editor & Publisher*, is indicative of the trends in digital publishing. Adobe Digital Publishing Suite (DPS) is software that allows companies to add interactivity to an otherwise static edition.

Ideally, in the near future, publishers who are utilizing high levels of interactivity will soon be experiencing greater sales, such as in the case of *Top Gear*. “Adobe digital publishing evangelist Colin Fleming said engaging interactivity is especially important for advertisers. “It’s about brand engagement activity,” he said, referring to how interactive features encourage readers to share and talk about ads via the Web and social media.” (Yang, 2013).

## **Methods of Content/Asset Management**

As new models of mobile and tablet devices are released, publishers are faced with constant challenges to overcome. As an example, there are now several different screen sizes and resolutions for which to develop content. There are also at least three distinct operating systems to work with, not including their own subsets: Android, iOS, and Windows. (Subsets include mobile devices and eReaders, e.g., the Kindle Fire runs a version of Android).

Content management becomes an entirely new issue to contend with as the digital editions become more prevalent. While writing in a time before color tablets and eReaders were a viable (and affordable) option, Jones makes a valid point regarding the digital transition. Technology certainly becomes a hurdle when converting content. Time and manpower are all things to account for. Not many companies are willing or able to hire a whole new team to develop their web or digital content; and thus there is a learning curve for existing designers and editing teams. “*African Arts* is already unusual among academic journals in carrying heavily illustrated articles; imagine how these might be augmented through moving images and sound on a tablet device.” (Jones, 2011) Of course, moving images and sounds are not typically included in a printed publication, and these are assets that require training to manage, let alone develop and create.

“Usability and aesthetics must therefore go hand in hand together” (Santos, 2011). Usability can absolutely not be overlooked in this instance. It is right to acknowledge the lack of the tactile nature when dealing with a digital magazine, and therefore, an entirely new set of design rules must be established to deal properly with these new aesthetics.

Santos Silva goes on to highlight the problems outlined by Jakob Nielsen in usability, including “touchable” areas being too small or not obvious enough (lacking affordance). There is a decreased chance of users willing to write or type on the iPad, and a high occurrence of accidental activation of interactive content (Santos, 2011). These are all issues designers are being faced with and dealing with in unique ways.

## **Marketing and Advertising**

Digital magazines are still faced with issues of marketing and how to handle advertising. Depending on the magazine, the digital edition might have more or less advertising than the printed version, and in some cases no advertising. The included ads might be more personalized or able to change based on when the reader is viewing

the magazine. For example, an advertisement for a Christmas sale would be viewed in December, but the same magazine might swap it for a Valentine's Day advertisement when the same viewer reads the same edition in February. Advertising certainly has much potential when it comes to interactivity and user integration.

However, advertisements face the same development issues as the content. Should the ads be interactive? At this point, many advertisers prefer to insert basic facsimile copies of their print ads, which in and of themselves present problems such as resolution changes, portrait/landscape modes, or different device types.

Advertising agencies face similar issues when developing content specifically for interactive digital magazines particularly when integrating with an existing magazine.

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that there are myriad factors that contribute to the development of digital publications and that many of them are challenges that require innovation and workflow adjustments to overcome. The market is turbulent, with new technology being released in a constant stream. Designers and publishers are being forced to adapt to screen size, resolution quality, and operating system differences while clinging to the brand identity and trying to make a comprehensive and accessible interactive document.

For magazine publishers, the transition to digital magazines and tablet editions is of vital importance. These publications are extensions of the magazine itself and have the potential for increasing readership and sales. In an environment of such rapid growth and opportunity, some publications will certainly be more able to adapt and build readership using digital editions.

### **Chapter 3: Research Objectives**

This thesis is an exploratory study on how the magazine industry is adapting to changing technology, specifically interactive digital editions designed for the tablet. Despite the logical nature of adoption before the transition, the rapid growth of tablet technology coupled with the popularity of tablet publications is forcing publishers to proceed without firm digital strategies (CDS, 2013). This research examines multiple technical facets of publishing, using several case studies involving surveys and interviews to explore how different companies approach their own unique content.

Through the use of surveys and interviews, the researcher gathered a picture of how digital publishing takes place, specifically how magazine publishers are approaching the digital transition to a tablet edition. Tablet editions have much potential for interactivity; however, it seems that some publications take more advantage of certain features than others. Furthermore, this research began to examine how profit and readership has been affected by the addition of a digital edition.

The survey gathered general information about process, demographics, and content. The responses from the survey were analyzed to identify any trends that might exist between different publisher's digital strategy without directly inquiring about it. The interviews aimed to better understand these strategies in a much more in-depth way and attempted to determine what digital strategy is in place. They also highlighted past failures, successes, as well as any future endeavors.

The researcher gathered information from conducting several interviews and was able to identify similarities in digital strategy.



## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

This Thesis Research was accomplished in three parts. Firstly, content analysis was used to analyze sample magazines to determine preliminary elements from which to develop survey questions. Tablets as a technology have only been available to consumers for a few years, and as such, the method of analysis required a combination of conventional and summative content analysis. Secondly, the survey was emailed to publishers who have digital editions of their magazines through the Apple marketplace (Newsstand). Thirdly, the survey included an invitation to participate in further discussion using the technology most convenient to the contact (e.g., Skype, mobile, email). The intent was to obtain several solid survey/discussion responses to document for the thesis work. The responses gathered were analyzed with the analysis and survey.

### **Content Analysis**

Initial coding elements were extracted from two magazine examples chosen by the researcher (Appendix A). The researcher chose a popular culture magazine, *Geek*, and the other, *Threads*, is instructional. Two types of magazines were selected in order to obtain more breadth of types of interactivity for coding. Both magazines have a digital edition from which to draw comparisons.

Each category in Figure 1 reflects a decision that a publisher would need to make to design a digital magazine to accompany or replace their print edition. For example, all “additional content” is content that requires time and effort to produce specifically for the digital edition. Therefore, the decision to dedicate the time and effort for new assets

Table 1: Tentative Data for Coding

<b>Additional Content</b>	<b>Interactive Content</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Print &amp; Interactive</b>
Audio	Degree of Interactivity	Subscriber Type	Price
Video	Ease of Navigation	Special Features	Subscription Model
Articles	Storefront	App Downloads	Special Subscription
Features		Demographics	Ads
Galleries			

becomes important to acknowledge. However, while design decisions are important to magazines as a medium, this research is not concerned with aesthetic design decisions.

## **Survey**

The surveys also contained more summative questions regarding company information, profit information and any readership, subscription or magazine specific statistics available. Beyond simple demographics, the survey attempted to piece together a basic overview of any existing digital strategy that might be in place at the responding publishing company. In-depth interviews conducted at the conclusion of the survey used more open-ended questions.

## *Sample*

Another goal of the survey was to establish a contact through phone or email with the Art Director, Creative Director or a person in a similar position as these job titles are associated with the creative decisions made when producing tablet editions, or at least supervising the migration to digital from print. These names are readily available in the credits column in the front of magazines or online. Many of these names are listed with contact information.

There are over 1000 magazines currently offered within the Apple Newsstand App. Magazines were selected from the list of those currently available in Newsstand. If a publication meets the following criteria, they are eligible for sampling: (1) Only published once a month, (2) Not comprised of primarily “news” content, (3) Not comprised of drug culture and (4) No erotic or pornographic content. For the ease of the researcher, magazines also needed to be published in English.

### *Procedure*

The questions in the survey were divided into sections including: demographics, additional content, print/interactive comparisons and interactive specific features. If a publication is only published digitally, the contact did not receive questions relating to print.

All respondents that were willing to participate in further conversations were then contacted for the interviews. Survey participants received a summary of the data collected from the survey, whereas participants in the in-depth interviews received executive summaries.

### **Interview Portion**

Utilizing summative content analysis of the survey responses, the researcher then developed a series of semi open-ended questions for the in-depth interviews. These interviews were intended to be more casual than the formal survey and focused on attitudes regarding digital magazine adoption, processes and methods for implementation rather than strict demographics.

The researcher then analyzed the responses for the interviews using the coding categories developed for the surveys such as: evaluating what features and interactive elements could be determined “high” or “low” interactivity, differences compared to

print features, and various demographics such as subscription models. These were then outlined and defined to determine criteria for evaluation of the magazines used in the case studies.

To illustrate “high” and “low” levels of interactivity, the researcher chose two drastically different structured magazines as examples for this proposal.

*Martha Stewart* magazine can be considered “high” for the purposes of this example because of several features, including a customized storefront and cross-marketing within the *Martha Stewart* parent brand, which encompasses all products and is not limited to publications, to all the sub brands which include specific product lines.

*Computer Arts* magazine can be considered “low” for the purposes of this example because it does not utilize digital magazines in a unique way. It features a static page layout that turns like physical pages. Some hyperlinks are active, but there is no other interactivity. Additionally, subscribers that choose to pay for the digital copy only are denied bonus web content.

In the case of the the interview questions, “high”, “medium” and “low” interactivity were determined based on survey responses and then fleshed out with the interview questions.

## **Limitations**

The scope of this research was not limited to magazines in any specific genre, excepting the criteria stated before. A distinction was, however, made for “news” magazines published on a regular basis. These types of magazines are not included, as a news article is a different type of content that is in direct competition with daily news websites. Another limitation regarding content is the comparison of replica and interactive magazines, as the readership and strategy could be quite different for one or the other.

## **Chapter 5: Results**

### **Overview**

The survey was conducted online over the course of about four months. It consisted of two primary question sets: one if the respondent had only digital publications and the other if a print and digital edition were both published. The data were compiled using a combination of the published list of magazines from Apple Newsstand and internet research to attempt to contact “Art Directors” or a similarly titled employee at each of the publications. Potential contacts were compiled into a list of 406 possible candidates who were each emailed with the introduction to the survey and the link to the survey to respond (Appendix C & D). The results of these surveys were then compiled into a spreadsheet and given a numeric code to provide confidentiality.

As mentioned in the methodology, most of the respondents consented to be interviewed further (Appendix E). These responses proved to be invaluable to the overall analysis so the researcher decided to utilize all of the responses with the hope of increased validity. The researcher then organized the data into relevant graphs with the simple goal of reporting the results.

At the conclusion of the survey portion of the study, the researcher had 24 total responses; approximately a 6% response rate. However, because only five (20%) of the respondents were digital-only publications, some modifications had to be made to the analysis methodology. Sixteen of the respondents consented to the interview and provided further information with varying degrees of detail.

## **Demographics**

As aforementioned, 24 magazine publishers responded to the initial survey, 5 digital-only and 19 digital/print magazines. Of these, 16 responded to the interview questions (Appendix E). These magazines were of many genres, including but not limited to: fashion, crafting, religion and sports. Fortunately, the sample included magazines with total subscription numbers as small as 200 and as large as 120,000.

## **Survey Results**

The survey was divided into two sets depending on whether the responder published the magazine solely digitally or also printed. As there was a low responder rate within the digital-only category, all results below are from the entire sample unless otherwise specified and refer only to data that were provided by both groups. The survey itself was divided into three sections: Demographics and Workflow, Publishing and Interactivity, and Business Practices.

The following results are organized according to the research objectives outlined in Chapter 3.

### **Research Objective: How are Publishers approaching a digital transition?**

Several questions on the survey and interview were targeted to investigate decisions made early within the transition to the digital platform. Respondents were asked about the technical aspects of their workflows as well as business decisions they might have to make in order to produce a digital magazine. These latter questions also inquired about industry pressures or perceived challenges within the production cycle.

## Software

Figure 1 shows the distribution of publishing software choices made by the respondents. Adobe Digital Publishing Suite leads with just under half the respondents while Mag+ is the second most popular choice. The other options, Zinio, Folio and Issuu were offered. The primary response within the “other” category was some form of .EPUB

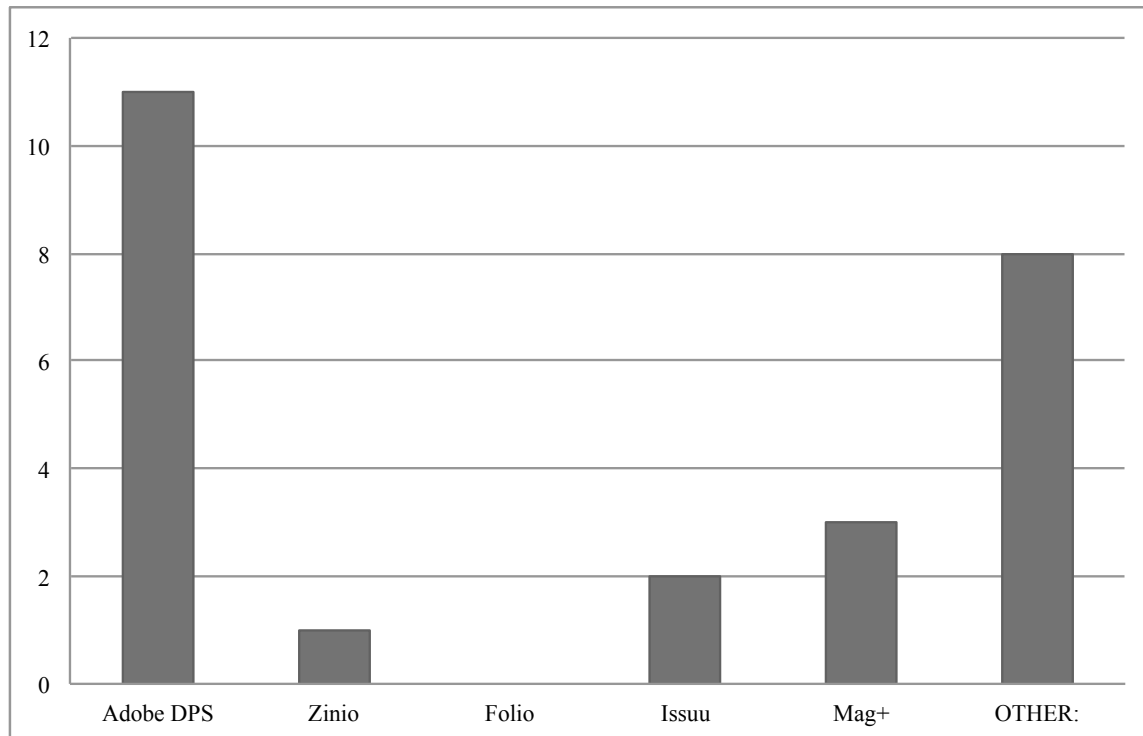


Figure 1 “What software do you use to publish the digital magazine?”

format, which can be delivered on a variety of platforms and devices.

Survey respondents were also asked in the interview portion why the software was chosen (Appendix C & D) as well as what software was used to design the magazine before going digital.

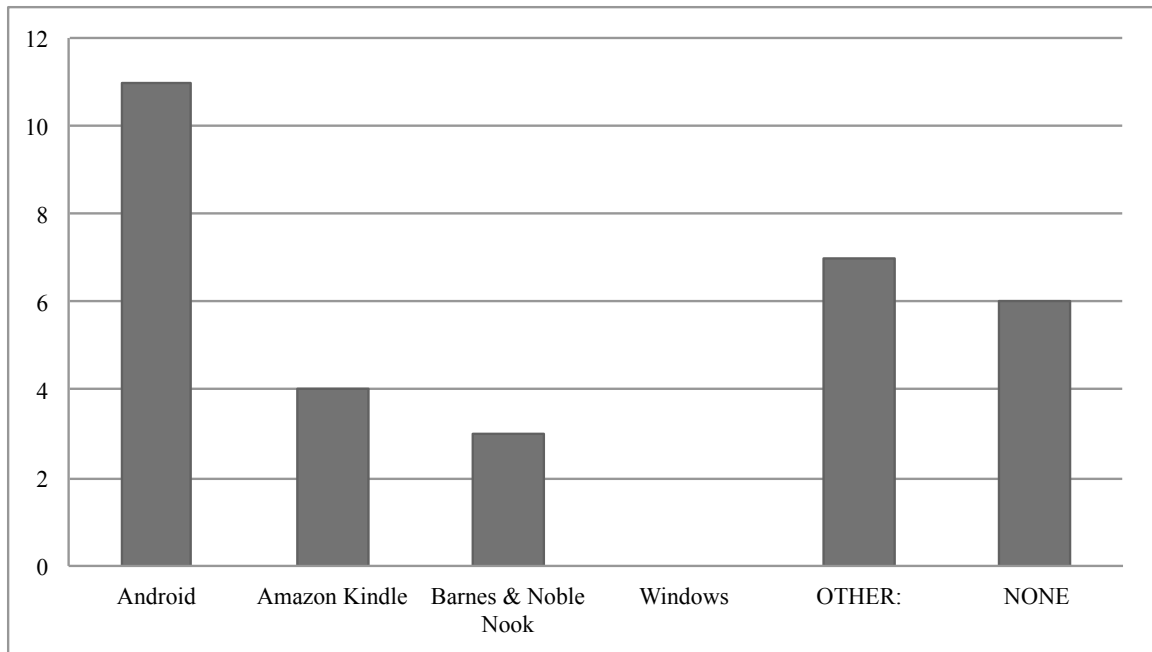


Figure 2 “What platforms other than Apple Newsstand do you publish the digital edition?”

### *Platforms*

Figure 2 displays the platform distribution choices. As of May, 2014, the mobile/tablet market was approximately 50% Apple iOS, 37% Android OS, .8% Windows, and .8% Kindle (although Kindle is the only brand without a mobile phone product) (Netmarketshare.com, 2014). Again, in this case the “Other” category is largely represented by various other .EPUB circulation options. “None” indicates those who chose to publish their digital edition only with Apple Newsstand.

### *Customized Storefront*

Figure 3 displays use of a customized storefront (see Glossary). Respondents were asked if they had a storefront. If the response was “no,” they were asked if it was because of their publishing software options. Most respondents replied “yes,” they currently use



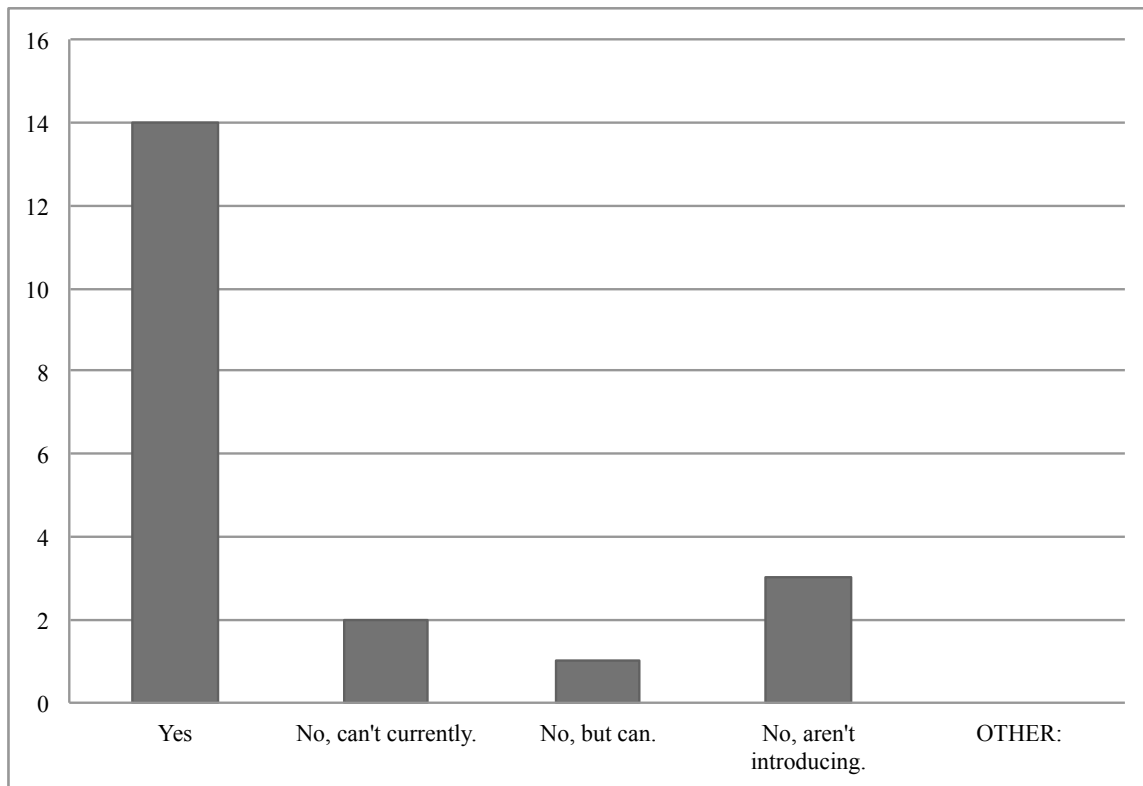


Figure 3 “Do you have a customized storefront?”

customized storefront. Only one digital-only responder responded that they did not have a storefront (the other four have customized storefronts), and they reported the capability to introduce one in the future, meaning that all of the “no” responses are from the digital-and-print category.

### Business Practices

Both the survey questions and interview portion addressed specific ways the publisher might address the business side of a digital transition, including company training and reasons why the digital edition was introduced in the first place.

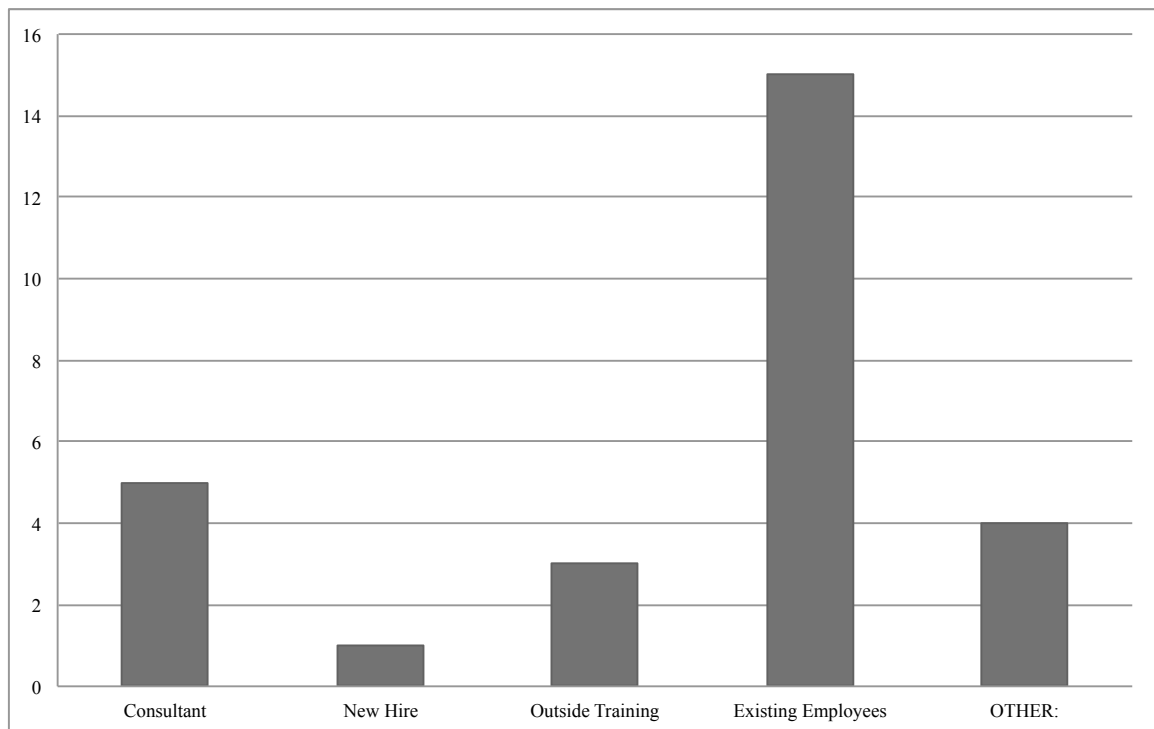


Figure 4 “Which of the following choices were made to launch the digital edition?”

### *Company Size*

While not specifically requested, some magazines explicitly stated within their interview responses that they were a small company. It is impossible to make any comparisons between companies as not all respondents remarked on the size of their company. It is notable that at least one publication is run entirely by one man, while two others reported one-person only design teams (Appendix E).

### *Employee Training*

Figure 4 displays company decisions in regards to employee training when introducing or launching a digital magazine. Although five of these respondents only

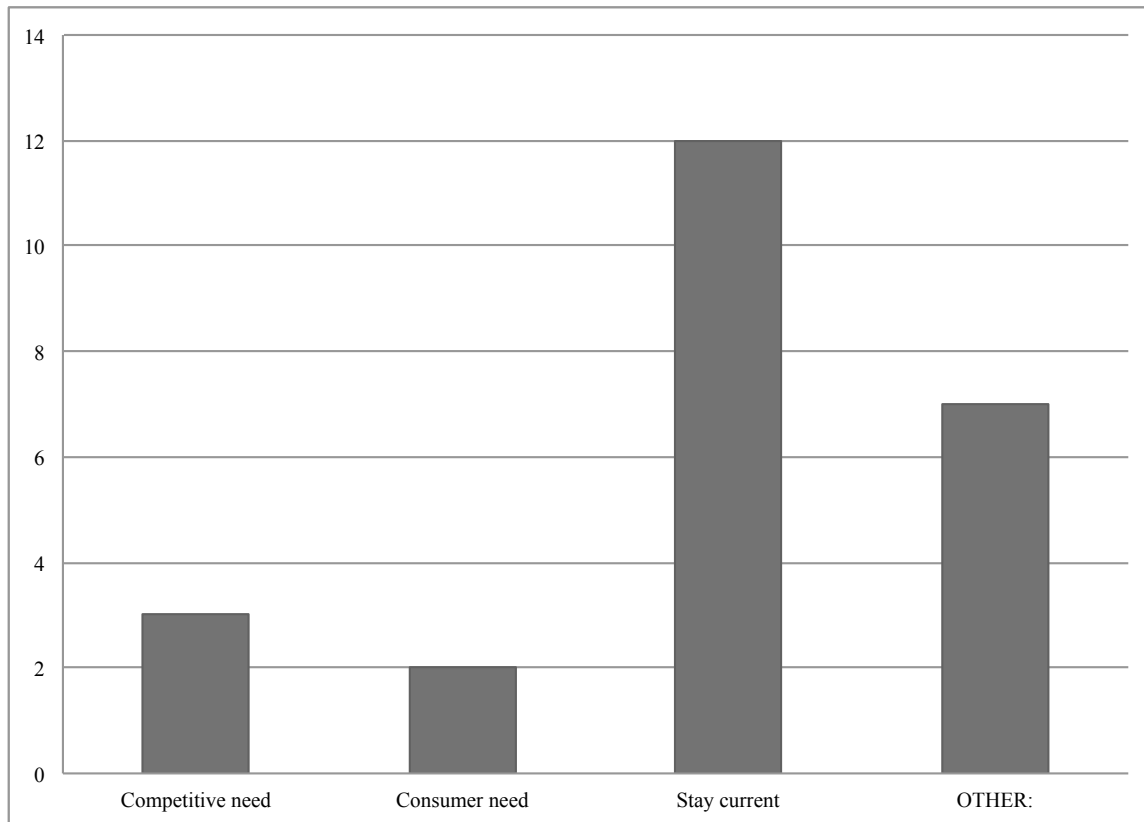


Figure 5 “Why did you introduce a digital edition?”

publish digitally, most companies still preferred to have employees learn the necessary skills to publish a digital edition.

### *Why Digital?*

Figure 5 displays responses when participants were asked why a digital edition had been introduced, bearing in mind that a few of the magazines either never had a print edition or introduced a print edition after the digital. The responses for “other” were too specific to include in the larger categories, such as “Build awareness of our brand.” or combined several options, such as “Many reasons. It gave us an opportunity to be global and [in the] long term I think everyone will need to. And [to] save costs.”

Table 2 “Please indicate which types of interactivity are currently offered.”

Magazine	URLS	Slideshows	Scrolling Text	Frames	3-D	Left>Right	Up>Down	Information	Social Media	Other	None	Total
001	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			7
002	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o				8
003	o	o	o		o	o	o	o	o			7
004	o	o	o			o	o	o	o			6
005	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		o	o		9
006	o		o			o						3
007	o											1
008	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			9
009	o	o	o	o								4
010	o								o			2
011	o											1
012						o						1
013											o	0
014	o					o	o	o	o			4
015	o	o				o	o	o	o			5
016											o	0
017	o											1
018	o											1
019	o	o							o			3
020	o	o				o	o		o			5
021	o	o	o	o	o	o						6
022	o											1
023	o			o		o	o		o			5
024											o	0

## **Interactive Qualities**

The research also sought to begin to explore what levels of interactivity might exist within magazines. There are different categories of interactive magazines (Appendix B) as well as sub-categories within each. Respondents were asked to outline what interactive features were offered within the magazine as well as to indicate what additional assets were included within the digital edition. Further, within the interview portion, respondents were asked about the future of the magazine itself and any pertinent expansion or enhancement plans that were in place.

### *Interactivity*

Table 2 displays the amount of interactivity indicated by each magazine, in this case by how often a type of interactivity was reported. Overwhelmingly, “URLS or Hyperlinks” is the most popular type of interactivity, while “Information Submission” is the least (Information Submission refers to any comment boxes, survey submission, etc.) Also of note, four magazines reported no interactivity at all, indicating a static magazine reproduction. Following the data collection, the magazines were ranked according to their reported interactivity. Magazines who reported 0-2 types of interactivity are considered “Low Interactivity”, 3-5 “Average Interactivity” and 6-9 “High Interactivity.”

### *Additional Assets*

Figure 6 shows additional assets created specifically for or used exclusively within the digital magazine with video taking the lead followed by audio and article content. These assets differ from interactivity because they deal directly with content creation. Tentatively, they do not bear much impact on the quality of interactivity because it is impossible to gauge the effectiveness and/or quality of these assets for each

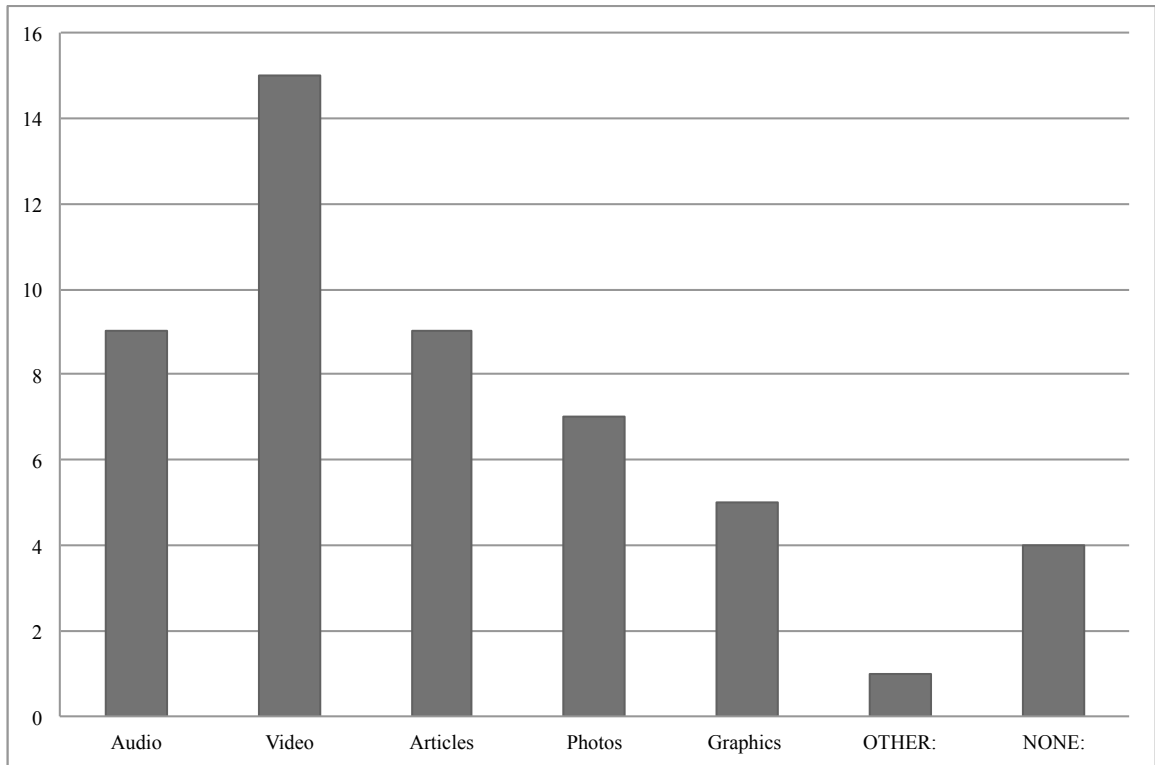


Figure 6 “What additional assets are included in the digital magazine?”

magazine who chooses to utilize them. For example, one magazine’s audio content may be superfluous while another’s may be pivotal to understanding content.

### **Profit and Readership**

Lastly the study aimed to discover challenges or successes regarding readership, profit, and general monetization. Respondents were not asked directly about profits or sales but rather subscription numbers and distribution numbers.

### *Cost*

Within the interview portion of the study, several respondents mentioned cost especially when asked about challenges of digital publishing, although they were not specifically asked about budget or similar concerns. Several magazines (Appendix E) offered unique insights that primarily dealt with monetization of the digital edition.

019: “Trying to get the right amount of extra content into the digital version without devaluing content from the print version.”

018: “Deciding how we want to monetize it would be number two.”

013: “We are not expanding at the moment...The digital sales are but a small part of our overall magazine sales at this point.”

014: “The next major challenge is selling enough subscriptions to offset [software] subscription costs.”

015: “Finding ways to monetize the digital edition.”

005: “Marketing the app appears to be the most important thing.”

001: “Second biggest challenge has been getting advertisers to support the publication and readers to pay for it. Monetization is a big challenge.”

One of the issues that digital publishers currently face is the ability to monetize the digital edition through subscriptions or advertising sales. Many magazines still rely on the print advertising sales to finance both editions of the magazine, so losing interest and therefore advertising in the print edition before gaining support for the digital would spell financial ruin.

### *App Based Publishing*

While the study does not concern non-Newsstand publishing, several respondents stated within the interview that their magazine would be moving towards app-based

publishing within the next few years to allow for greater variation in platform and content.

019: “Initially, we used [software] and then changed to [software] as we wanted to produce an app for iOS and Android platforms which would host the digital magazine alongside live news feeds...”

010: “Our goal is to have our stories seen by the greatest number of people possible, which means making sure that our magazine is available in any significant marketplace.”

023: “[The biggest challenge has been] being able to self-publish on platforms like iTunes and Google without having to get a third party involved.”

002: “Choosing to develop...issues for iOS, Android, Kindle and eventually Windows means that we have to create our interactivity twice...Plus there are so many devices, sizes, etc., that it can be difficult to maintain the quality we want on every single platform and device.”

Although it was not a goal of this study to determine future trends within digital publishing outside of Apple Newsstand, app-based publishing was brought up by a few magazines and is worth further consideration.



## **Chapter 6: Summary & Conclusions**

While some research has been conducted on reader preference, the fact remains that digital publishing, particularly within the Apple Newsstand iPad context, is a young industry and there is much to be discovered.

### **Analysis**

While keeping in mind that this is largely an exploratory study with only 24 responses, there are some possible trends or patterns that emerged during analysis that are worth further exploring. The good news was that the responding sample was very varied, containing magazines of all different publishing techniques, subscription numbers and levels of interactivity. Just this wide variation of responders seems to reinforce that there are no “Best Practices” in place when discussing digital publishing on a grand scale. In this application, both workflow and best practices indicate the overarching business practices that are not genre or issue dependent.

The researcher acknowledges that there are bound to be differences within genre publications, a craft magazine may have a very different workflow than a fashion magazine. However, the questions within the survey and the interview portion aimed to better examine the digital workflow without these specific biases.

Although the results are not generalizable to the entire population, there are some noteworthy observations to be made.

- Small companies struggle to find a reasonably priced app for publishing with interactivity.

- After Apple, Android devices are the most popular platform for publishing but are not the same file types as Apple Newsstand.
- URLs and Hyperlinks are the most basic and common type of interactivity. There are some magazines with zero interactivity.
- Video is the most popular additional asset within a digital publication.
- Employees are largely expected to learn about digital magazines on their own.
- Many publications felt the need to introduce a digital edition to “Stay Current.”

### *Survey Results: Demographics*

While some responders specifically stated within their interview that Adobe Digital Publishing Suite was too expensive for their needs, there is no doubt that it was the most popular software (Figure 1). This is largely due to integration with Adobe InDesign, considered a publishing standard by the industry. Following is Mag+, which is also an InDesign plug-in. While one responder cited Mag+ as the better, less expensive alternative, another respondent cited Mag+ to be too expensive. The “Other” category consisted of primarily .EPUB versions, which are the least platform specific and can be distributed over a wide arrange of devices and operating systems. However, .EPUB versions are not as customizeable in regards to interactivity, relying on HTML5 knowledge and the capabilities of various reading software such as Aldiko.

It was expected that the results show Android would be the most popular secondary publishing platform (behind Apple Newsstand), as that directly reflects the market shares (Figure 2). Kindle and .EPUB-type platforms were close behind, reflecting the large portion of e-readers on the market. Kindle, not being a phone operating system, suffers from having no smart-phone market share.

### *Survey Results: Publishing & Interactivity*

A customized storefront has different degrees of customization, from simple graphics to product integration. Over 50% of responders have a customized storefront in some degree, while only a few reported that they did not and had no immediate plans to introduce one (Figure 3). There is not yet evidence that a customized storefront boosts revenue, but it does provide another branding opportunity.

In regards to actual interactivity, “URLS and Hyperlinks” (Table 2) are the most popular choice, as well as one of the easiest to implement. Replica magazines, those created from .PDFs of the original print edition, are able to insert hyperlinks with relative ease even without complex proprietary software. Although navigation seems somewhat intuitive, most magazines must decide how they would like their users to navigate through the content. In a traditional print magazine, the layout is vertical, navigation left-to-right. In a digital magazine, users can also navigate up and down as well as have a portrait or landscape layout. One responder specifically mentioned that they would be committing to a landscape layout for their magazine and not offering portrait.

Social Media sharing capabilities were the third most popular option, just above photo slideshows. Social Media is an increasingly important force in publishing, and allowing readers the ability to share and “like” within the actual publication is pivotal to user interaction, retention, dwell time, and publicity. Photo slideshows can mean simply the capability to store several photos where in print there would be only one, but slideshows can also act as impromptu animations.

In regards to additional assets, video was the most popular addition to the digital magazines (Figure 6) Naturally video is not supported with a print magazine, and video is excellent at conveying more information in a small space within a magazine. Articles and audio were close to follow. Since digital publishing does not charge by the page and is not restricted to a format of four page sections, it seems natural to add extra articles that

may not have made it to print. Audio content, like video content, can add to the content or impact of an article.

The effectiveness of any of these interactive features would depend on the magazine and the quality of the asset in question. There are myriad factors that go into the development and placement of these assets, for example, the addition of a supplemental video would be intended to demonstrate a complex principle discussed within an article. Assuming the video is well produced and informative, the simple question of where it will be placed within the article can have a large impact on the reader's comprehension. Now assuming that the video is not well produced or is not informative and merely created and placed to demonstrate the ability of watching a video with the article, the effectiveness of this particular asset is next to nothing. Extra consideration should be made to account for the time, staff and money used to produce extra assets like these as well. Additionally, factors such as the amount of time to download a magazine, the ability to read it offline, etc., mean that introducing an interactive asset like a video or audio clip may do more harm to a magazine than good.

#### *Survey Results: Business Practices*

While this question does not take into account when a magazine introduced a digital publication, over 50% of the responders have employees accept responsibility for learning the new software to publish the digital magazine (Figure 4). A few of the remaining responders brought in consultants, and fewer provided outside training. Only one company reported hiring a new employee with the specific job skills necessary for a digital publication.

One possible explanation for this result is a combination of the relative young age of digital publishing and the recent economic state. Small companies, which made up approximately half of the sample, are less likely to be able to invest in a new employee

to assist in a publication that, in some cases, is a short term publication. This could result in a company producing a quick version of their publication just to have one within the marketplace. This is a workflow that does not not justify investing in new staff.

In regards to why a digital publication had been introduced (Figure 5), most companies reported a desire to “stay current” while few reported that their competition created the need. Even fewer reported the consumer created the need. “Consumer Need” and “Competitive Advantage” can both be considered part of “staying current.” Respondents could have chosen a more specific reason to introduce the digital magazine, but many did not.

The results seem to support the picture of a new industry. Some are trying to “stay current” but are unable to invest in the resources required to make significant changes or develop firm practices for digital publishing. Others may have the resources available but are not old enough publications in the digital realm to have figured out a good formula for their digital publications, either erring on the side of caution or throwing all available tools into the mix with varying degrees of success.

## **Limitations**

The researcher experienced unanticipated difficulties regarding data gathering in regards to contacting the industry. As a result the survey and interview responses represent a much smaller demographic than originally hoped. The largest challenge was reconciling the small number of digital-only responders. As there were only five responders within the digital-only category, no comparisons could be made between the groups. Additionally, questions that addressed either category specifically could not be analyzed.

Further, because the researcher used Google to find contact information for each magazine, it is possible that the solicitation did not reach its intended target in many occasions. A list of relevant contacts may have had a higher response rate. As a result of the low response rate, the researcher utilized all of the interview results.

## **Future Research**

As this is an exploratory study, there are many possibilities for further research, including but certainly not limited to investigating user preference for each and every aspect of interactivity (see Appendix A). Similarly, as the researcher concentrated her focus on the Apple iPad, research should certainly be done on other devices, operating systems, and sizes particularly given the rising market share of Android devices. The experience of reading a magazine digitally is presumably unique on the smaller mobile (smart phone) screen, and would also warrant further investigation.

Genre of magazine may also play a large role in what users will come to expect in terms of interactivity. A sewing projects magazine may benefit from 3-D models more than a quilting magazine would; however, that is impossible to conclude with any certainty at the conclusion of this research. It may also be that this same set of survey questions and interviews, conducted with magazines of a much higher circulation number would yield completely different results.

Ideally a more comprehensive picture of the digital publishing realm would be obtained with the specific goal of an equal number of digital-only and digital and print

magazines. It would be further beneficial if one could ensure the responder was the employee most directly in charge of the digital publication.

It is this researcher's opinion that it will begin to make business sense for magazines to move to app-based publishing where they will be able to skip third-party sellers like Apple Newsstand. In the longterm this may mean hiring a development team. While the development process itself is much simpler the results have greater cross-platform potential.

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## Appendix A: Framework

Framework for survey development developed from pilot study.

Table 3. Additional Content (from Print Edition)

Audio	Same	Similar	New	None
Video	Same	Similar	New	None
Articles	Same	Similar	New	None
Features	Same	Similar	New	None
Galleries	Same	Similar	New	None

*This table depicts content differences between the print and interactive versions.*

Table 4. Interactive Specific Features

Degrees of Interactivity	None	Replica	Interactive	Interactive +
Ease of Navigation	Print	Print +	Print +, Software	
Storefront	Same	Similar	New	None

*Here the focus is explore features that are unique to the interactive edition, and are new features that need to be contended with, either through training or new staff.*

Table 5. Print & Interactive Feature Comparisons

Price	Same	More	Less	Free
Subscription Model	Same	Less Commitment	More Commitment	Included
Special Features	Same	More for print	More for iPad	None
Ads	Same	More	Less	

*If there are differences between the print and interactive version, they need to be addressed, as well as why those differences exist.*

Table 6. User Interface & Human Influences

Subscriber Type	One, print	One, iPad	Subscription, print	Subscription, iPad
Dwell Time	Same	More	Less	
Interactions	High	Low		
App Downloads	w/purchase		w/o purchase	
Demographics	Age	Area	Gender	

*These topics have to do almost exclusively with strict demographics, and are relevant for contextual purposes.*

## Appendix B: Interactivity Levels

**Dynamic:** Editorial can be created and/or selected at point of delivery. With a dynamic digital magazine, each recipient can receive different content and that content can change at any time.

**Targeted:** Editorial is changed for specifically defined groups and/or platforms before point of delivery. With a targeted digital magazine, each group of recipients, whether they are segment demographically or because of the platform they use to receive the digital product, receive a copy with different content specifically selected for that group. Apart from minor updates, the content cannot change once the issue is made available.

**Enhanced:** If a print brand existed first, “enhanced” is editorial that is retained from the original edition and is redesigned and/or supplemented. With an enhanced digital product, each issue’s content is primarily taken (but not necessarily replicated in its entirety) from the original edition (whether in print or digital). Apart from minor updates, the content cannot change once the issue is made available.

**Replica:** If a print brand existed first, editorial and design are unchanged from the original print edition. With a replica digital product, each issue’s content and design are identical to the original edition. Apart from minor updates, the content cannot change once the issue is made available.

(Adapted from the BPA Worldwide F.A.Q. BPA Digital Circulation Auditing, 2013  
[http://www.bpaww.com/Bpaww\\_com/HTML/resources/Digital\\_Auditing\\_FAQ.pdf](http://www.bpaww.com/Bpaww_com/HTML/resources/Digital_Auditing_FAQ.pdf))

### **Appendix C: Survey (Digital Only)**

1. What software do you use to publish the magazine?

- ☐ Adobe Digital Publishing Suite
- ☐ Zinio
- ☐ Folio
- ☐ Issuu
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

2. Aside from Apple Newsstand, on what platforms is the electronic version of the magazine published?

- ☐ Android (Google Play)
- ☐ Amazon Kindle
- ☐ Barnes & Noble Nook
- ☐ Microsoft Windows (Windows Store)
- ☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )

3. Approximately how many subscribers does the magazine have?

- ☐ Under 200 subscribers
- ☐ Between 201 and 500 subscribers
- ☐ Between 501 and 1000 subscribers
- ☐ Between 1001 and 2000 subscribers
- ☐ Between 2001 and 5000 subscribers
- ☐ Over 5000 subscribers
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

4. Approximately how many individual digital issues are sold in the first month of that issue's circulation?

- ☐ Under 200 issues
- ☐ Between 201 and 500 issues
- ☐ Between 501 and 1000 issues
- ☐ Between 1001 and 2000 issues
- ☐ Between 2001 and 5000 issues
- ☐ Over 5000 issues
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

5. Are subscribers offered any benefits from their subscription?

- ☐ Yes, digital subscribers get exclusive web content for free.
- ☐ Yes, digital subscribers get exclusive content not available elsewhere.
- ☐ There is no additional content for digital subscribers.
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

6. Does your Newsstand publication have a customized storefront?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, and my publishing software does not allow for customization.
- ☐ No, although we could in the future with our current publishing software.
- ☐ No, and we don't plan to.

7. Does the digital version of your magazine contain interactive elements? Check all that apply:

- ☐ URLs or Hyperlinks
- ☐ Photo Slideshows
- ☐ Scrolling Text Boxes
- ☐ Moveable frames (slide in/out, expand, etc.)
- ☐ 3-D or rotating objects
- ☐ Left > Right Navigation & Up > Down Navigation
- ☐ Information Submission (Comments, Forms, etc.)
- ☐ Social Media 'share' capabilities
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

8. Does the digital edition contain any additional content? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Audio
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Articles
- ☐ Photos
- ☐ Graphics (Includes 3D models, static illustrations, etc.)

9. Which of the following choices were made to launch the digital edition:

- ☐ We hired one or more staff members with specific digital knowledge
- ☐ We provided outside training/education for digital software for existing staff
- ☐ We brought in a consultant to aid with digital workflow
- ☐ Employees assumed the responsibilities of learning new skills
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

10. Why did you introduce a digital edition?

- ☐ Competition created the need
- ☐ Consumers created the need
- ☐ Part of an effort to stay current

## **Appendix D: Survey (Digital and Print)**

1. What software do you use to publish the magazine?

- ☐ Adobe Digital Publishing Suite
- ☐ Zinio
- ☐ Folio
- ☐ Issuu
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

2. Aside from Apple Newsstand, on what platforms is the electronic version of the magazine published?

- ☐ Android (Google Play)
- ☐ Amazon Kindle
- ☐ Barnes & Noble Nook
- ☐ Microsoft Windows (Windows Store)
- ☐ Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_ )

3. Approximately how many subscribers does the magazine have?

- ☐ Under 200 subscribers
- ☐ Between 201 and 500 subscribers
- ☐ Between 501 and 1000 subscribers
- ☐ Between 1001 and 2000 subscribers
- ☐ Between 2001 and 5000 subscribers
- ☐ Over 5000 subscribers
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

4. Of these subscribers, approximately how many are digital subscriptions?

5. Approximately how many individual digital issues are sold in the first month of that issue's circulation?

- ☐ Under 200 issues
- ☐ Between 201 and 500 issues
- ☐ Between 501 and 1000 issues
- ☐ Between 1001 and 2000 issues
- ☐ Between 2001 and 5000 issues
- ☐ Over 5000 issues
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

5. Approximately how many individual print issues are sold in the first month of that issue's circulation?

- ☐ Under 200 issues
- ☐ Between 201 and 500 issues
- ☐ Between 501 and 1000 issues
- ☐ Between 1001 and 2000 issues
- ☐ Between 2001 and 5000 issues
- ☐ Over 5000 issues
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Are subscribers offered any benefits from their subscription?

- ☐ Yes, print subscribers get the digital edition for free.
- ☐ Yes, print and digital subscribers get web content for free.
- ☐ Yes, digital subscribers get exclusive content not available elsewhere.
- ☐ Yes, print subscribers typically get physical content (CD, Poster, etc.)
- ☐ No, print and digital subscribers have the same benefits.
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

What options are offered to advertisers?

- ☐ Separate rates for print and digital editions
- ☐ Combined rates for print and digital editions.
- ☐ Digital advertising is included with print.
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

9. Does your Newsstand publication have a customized storefront?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, and my publishing software does not allow for customization.
- ☐ No, although we could in the future with our current publishing software.
- ☐ No, and we don't plan to.

When is the digital magazine made available through Apple Newsstand?

- ☐ At the same time as print.
- ☐ Before print.
- ☐ After print.

11. Does the digital version of your magazine contain interactive elements? Check all that apply:

- ☐ URLs or Hyperlinks
- ☐ Photo Slideshows
- ☐ Scrolling Text Boxes
- ☐ Moveable frames (slide in/out, expand, etc.)
- ☐ 3-D or rotating objects
- ☐ Left > Right Navigation & Up > Down Navigation
- ☐ Information Submission (Comments, Forms, etc.)
- ☐ Social Media 'share' capabilities
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

12. Does the digital edition contain any additional content? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Audio
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Articles
- ☐ Photos
- ☐ Graphics (Includes 3D models, static illustrations, etc.)

14. Which of the following choices were made to launch the digital edition:

- ☐ We hired one or more staff members with specific digital knowledge
- ☐ We provided outside training/education for digital software for existing staff
- ☐ We brought in a consultant to aid with digital workflow
- ☐ Employees assumed the responsibilities of learning new skills
- ☐ Other (Please indicate: \_\_\_\_\_ )

15. Why did you introduce a digital edition?

- ☐ Competition created the need
- ☐ Consumers created the need
- ☐ Part of an effort to stay current

## **Appendix E: Interview Questions**

### **1. What led to your decision to use [software] as your publishing software?**

- 001** “My choice to use Magplus was fairly easy -- there weren’t many other options available. Only other option that I was aware of at the time was Adobe’s DPS system. And it was way too expensive for my needs.”
- 002** “We had a list of requirements that included multi-platform reach, extended interactive content, statistical tracking, and flexibility - that only a few companies are offering right now. Although something like Adobe’s publishing software would have fit our publishing requirements, the cost did not fit with our small company budget. Plus we needed a large enough company who could house our content on multiple servers around the world.”
- 005** “At the same time we were thinking about creating the magazine Mag+ ran a competition titled “Magnify your world”. We thought it is a good opportunity to try and test our idea. This also gave us a deadline to work for. Luckily we have won first place and the prize was invested back into the magazine to develop it further.  
Two other points in behalf of Mag+ were that at the time their platform was very cheap (you can still work with the platform for free and pay only when you are ready to publish).  
Second thing is that they are a bunch of very friendly and supporting people and it is great to work with them.”
- 006** “Our repro house is owned by the publishers; they license Yudu’s software and keep it all in-house. I was not a part of the decision-making process, but that’s the way I would have done it anyway as it means we can offer digital publishing to our advertising clients as well, which when you factor in our industry databases, makes it a very appealing proposition.”
- 007** “Using ISSUU was cheap and easy...”
- 008** “Mag+ offered the plugin for Adobe Indesign to create the interactive pages from our print design.”



- 010** “Our goal is to have our stories seen by the greatest number of people possible, which means making sure that our magazine is available in any significant marketplace. That requires a variety of tools and services to be employed. It also helps that I have a background in technology and have a familiarity with a wide variety of tools.
- \* Maz - 3rd party company that produces single issue sale and subscription apps for magazines and makes them available on the Apple Newsstand and Google Play.
  - \* Amazon KPP - Amazon’s (now closed to people who aren’t already in) program that allows magazine publishers to offer subscriptions through Amazon - by far, the biggest player in the field.
  - \* inDesign - one of the top desktop publishing programs in the field, we use it to create our print edition and the PDF files needed by Maz
  - \* Dreamweaver - leading web development tool, used to format the content for our HTML and EPUB/MOBI editions, also used to create the feed files required by Amazon KPP
  - \* Sigil - free epub editor that we use with Dreamweaver to put the finishing touches on for EPUB edition”
- 013** “Adobe and InDesign are very commonly used in the magazine world and both programs suit our needs.”
- 014** “We evaluated a number of other options, such as MAZ, Mag+, and RareWire. RareWire had too steep a learning curve given existing talents on the team, and we thought MAZ’s product was simply a glorified PDF. As we were already using Adobe InDesign expertly, DPS had the cleanest integration and the best features.”
- 015** “We do not use it. I was mistaken.”
- 018** “That was primarily a decision made by our publisher during the first issue, but I believe that they provided services at a competitive price. The services were a direct response triggered to our advertisers so that anybody who was looking through our digital edition who wanted more information from our advertisers could contact them directly through I think two or three means.”
- 019** “Initially we used Issuu and then changed to PageSuite as we wanted to produce an app for iOS and Android platforms which would host the digital magazines alongside live news feeds from our website.”
- 020** “My design team chose it.”

- 021** “Our eMedia Art Director tested both Adobe DPS and Aquafadas to create a mock magazine article tablet version. Her conclusions were that the Aquafadas user interface was easier to use, the final mock tablet article looked more impressive for the Aquafadas version, and the Aquafadas article was less “buggy” than the Adobe version. (Our experience with some Adobe products is that they are sometimes buggy, and Adobe doesn’t seem to fix some of the bugs, even after generations of updates to an application.)”
- 022** “Quark Xpress. We have used that to produce the paper magazine for 20 years so it is natural to continue.”
- 023** “Our Designer uses that which is why that program is used.”

## **2. What software do you design the original magazine for the digital edition before going to Newsstand?**

### **2.a Is the digital magazine based off the print document? (Digital/Print Only)**

- 001**        “I use Adobe InDesign to design with.”
- 002**        “InDesign, plus Flash and Edge for the interactivity.”
- 005**        “Mag+ work as a plugin for Adobe Indesign. The magazine is mostly illustrated by hand. Some parts are coded in in html5 but the final layout is done in Indesign. Publishing the magazine is done with a special tool supplied by Mag+.”
- 006**        “Quark XPress.”  
“Yup. It’s made from the same PDF files and is distributed slightly ahead of the print version. Sometimes we incorporate video into the digital version - for example, a casino recently did a very fast refurb, and captured it on time-lapse, so we put that into the story in the digital magazine, replacing an image.”
- 007**        “We have moved designers...so he uses indesign.”  
“Yep.”
- 008**        “Adobe Indesign.”  
“Yes, but created as an interactive layout.”
- 010**        “Stories start as Word documents and are laid out in Dreamweaver first. We move from their to finished issues in EPUB, convert to MOBI, and then convert that to RTF for import into InDesign for print.”  
“No. We find that digital to print is quicker, but one of our digital formats (Maz) is based off the PDF from the print edition.”
- 013**        “We send pdfs of the magazine/stories to Zinio and Magster and they take it from there.”
- 014**        “Adobe InDesign Creative Cloud.”  
“Yes, though we do add some bonus content to the digital edition. The print editions are designed first for both magazines. We’ve shifted how they’re designed as a result. The insides of the print editions are b&w. We now select colour images, discarding the colour for print and keeping it for digital.”

- 015** “Adobe InDesign.”  
“Yes”
- 018** “Adobe CS – the magazine is laid out in InDesign and then we send a .PDF to be digitized.”
- 019** “InDesign”  
“Yes”
- 020** “InDesign”  
“Exact replica with media additions.”
- 021** “Adobe InDesign CC”  
“Yes. At this point, we use the print version InDesign documents to build the tablet version. For the first several issues, the tablet version will be a digital replica of the print version with added “enrichments” (video, 360° package photography, slideshows) to enhance the user’s tablet experience. Later in the year, we will be launching a tablet specific version of the magazine, which will be created specifically for tablets. We are committing to a horizontal orientation for the tablet specific version, and won’t build a vertical version. The current plan for the tablet version will be to take the content from the print version InDesign documents, and reflow that content into the templates created specifically for the tablet version.”
- 022** “About 8 years ago and we ran it concurrent with our paper issue until this year when we ceased having paper issues printed in bulk due to costs.. And at that time we set up our print on demand paper service via MagCloud which is part of HP.”  
“Yes, it is a direct pdf off the finished paper pages – we just export the Quark to a pdf and use that for our iOS app (which is produced for us by another company off the pdf) and for the pdf downloads.  
We also produce a text only e book of the articles in .epub and .mobi formats”
- 023** “Quark Xpress. We have used that to produce the paper magazine for 20 years so it is natural to continue.”  
“Our Designer does this and I think it is done in Adobe and then converted by another company that we use.”  
“Yes”

### **3. Have you always been a digital-only magazine? (Digital Only)**

- 001** “Yes, we’ve always been a digital-only publication.”
- 002** “Yes, this endeavor was driven by a marketing need for our custom home brands. It can cost a lot to print as much information as we have in these digital magazines. Digital (like Web) is immediate, flexible and timely. The magazine format (stories and articles and photos) is also ideal for delivering this kind of content to our prospective clients.”
- 005** “Yes.”

### **3. When did you introduce the digital edition? (Digital & Print Only)**

- 006** “Gosh... Ages ago. Probably five years ago. We were the first in our field to do it, if I remember right.”
- 007** “5 years ago.”
- 008** “About two years ago.”
- 010** “We started as digital and only added print in the last two years.”
- 013** “We introduced the digital version of the magazine about a year and a half ago.”
- 014** “We have two digital magazines, both based on print editions. One was launched in September 2013, the other in December 2013.”
- 015** “Originally 10 years ago. Then again in 2012.”
- 018** “Simultaneously. We’re in our third year now.”
- 019** “In its current format, January 2014.”
- 020** “4 years ago”
- 021** “For one of our publications, the first digital replica edition went live with the April 2014 issue. For another one of our publications, I’m creating the first digital replica tablet edition as we speak. It is our May issue, and we are hoping to have this go live within the next week or so. The third magazine we produce is scheduled to go live with the June 2014 issue.”

- 022** “I’m not sure I understand you – but I am the design team – and the editor and the tea boy – I produce the whole magazine myself except for proof readers, so please ask any questions about the desing team you wish ;)”
- 023** “Approximately 2 years ago.”

#### **4. Are there any current plans to expand or enhance the magazine?**

- 001** “Yes, there are plans to to expand/enhance. We are currently researching options for moving away from the Newsstand model and developing a full HTML5 version that would be available on any device and would not require us to stay in the iTunes area.”
- 002** “We are always looking for new ways to use interactive elements to showcase an idea or expand the reader experience.”
- 005** “We are working on an Android & Kindel support.”
- 006** “It’s really a part of the magazine’s outputting, so collected files are supplied to repro to be made into PDFs and checked, and it’s just slotted in to that process.”
- 007** “Not really...we are a niche publication.”
- 008** “Yes we are moving away from Mag+ and creating our own app that will host the interactive editions of the magazine within the app itself. Mag+ is too expensive, and in the long run we will save money by creating the infrastructure of the app ourselves. Our new app will have much more functionality as well.”
- 010** “Yes, we hope to increase the number of stories published in the magazine later this year.
- 013** “We are not expanding at the moment, but our subscription base continues to grow both through our direct-mail campaigns and through our digital sales. The digitals sales are but a small part of our overall magazine sales at this point.”
- 014** “DPS has a wide range of features we’re not using, including the ability to use animation and add rich diagrams. We’d like to explore using this to showcase new types of content.”
- 015** “Yes, we are in a content review process right now, and will be adding new coverage/sections.”
- 018** “There are longterm plans. We’re not in a planning phase like we’re going to do this in two issues, three issues. We have a good idea of some of the capabilities out there that we’re not tapping into, but as a young publication,

as a startup only in our third year, everything has growing pains. It'll take more bodies, more resources to make those things dynamic and unique. We don't want to put the proverbial cart before the horse. As we get our feet set, we'll build a team out and we'll make real concrete plans for how we want to do that."

**019** "Yes. We are always looking at new ways of enhancing the magazine for the digital version."

**020** "A few under investigation."

**021** "If there aren't enough "enhancements" included from the original content of the print editions (videos, etc. that have been available on our website to accompany some articles) we will occasionally add "bonus content" specifically for just the tablet editions."

**022** "We have increased pages by 8 (from 52 to 60 pages) since we went digital. [Title Removed] is a community magazine for those involved in [subject removed] Because I am single handed on the magazine and I do so much other work for [subject removed] as well I have no plans to develop it per se"

**023** "We are always working towards enhacnging our magazines both print and digitally."



## **5. Have you received any significant consumer feedback or suggestions?**

- 002** “Our feedback is generally good. Most say they like it or love it but don’t expand too much beyond that. Some ask for specific content, which we try to incorporate in to later issues if possible.”
- 005** “Most of the feedback we receive is very positive. There used to be some issues with the App working on old devices (iPad 1 iPhone 3) and some issues with the navigation of the App itself. But currently we can not do anything about that as this is a Mag+ issue. Feedback regarding the content was always positive.”
- 006** “We are published in an industry filled with Flash engineers and they love it. They understand the delivery mechanism, and know what is possible, so I think it’s fair to say they love it. It’s also an industry where you only hear if you cock up, and nobody has had a moan about it yet, so that’s a good sign.”
- 007** “Good feedback on the redesign.”
- 008** “All of our readers love our interactive edition of our magazine.”
- 010** “Significant? No, but we do get (and ask for) feedback.”
- 013** “We have received no feedback from readers on the digital versions at this time.”
- 014** “Not at this time. I suspect it is due to low subscription numbers.”
- 015** “We regularly reachout to readers for input via reader polls, etc.”
- 018** “Other than, “It’s convenient.” To give you an idea of the readership, our print distribution is about 41k copies, about 35k or so is direct. On the digital side we get about 7k additional, so it’s not massive. A lot of it is that it’s convenient, people want to read it on the go, and it’s also helpful for advertisers. If they’re trying to talk to someone and show them a feature in the latest issue, they don’t necessarily have to wait five days for the latest issue, they can just have them go to the website.”
- 019** “Our market research so far has been positive, with people saying they like the extra dimensions that cannot be added to print magazines, such as videos.”

- 020** “Sales are rocketing on all platforms, but no actual feedback“
- 021** “Since the issues are just going live now, there has not been any feedback yet. Plus, we are a business to business publishing company, and our magazines are not available on news stands to the general public.”
- 022** “Oh yes, our readers are very very supportive of what I do and I am in contact with a lot of them via FaceBook etc – I am a fairly major figure in the community so know a lot of people.”
- 023** “We always ask for feedback but we have not recieved a significant amount.”

## **6. What has been the greatest challenge of publishing a digital edition?**

- 001** “The greatest challenge? First, figuring out how to develop the publication in a way that was affordable and yet dynamic. I don’t have a developer. I don’t have investors. I have me, my brain and desire to see it succeed. Second biggest challenge has been getting advertisers to support the publication and readers to pay for it. Monetization is a big challenge.”
- 002** “What has been the greatest challenge of publishing a digital edition? I assume this question is geared more toward someone with a print version but I will answer from our perspective. Choosing to develop apps and issues for iOS, Android, kindle (Android) and eventually Windows means that we have to create our interactivity twice. Once with Edge for iOS and again with Flash for Android versions. Plus there are so many devices, different sizes etc, that it can be difficult to maintain the quality we want, on every single platform and device. We develop our own websites in-house too and trying to create consistent material for multiple digital devices is even more difficult than worrying about different browsers and monitor sizes for our site content.”
- 005** “Greatest challenge was, and still is, getting to new potential readers. Marketing the App appears to be (almost) the most important thing.”
- 006** “There really have not been any. We started out using Yudu’s software and I loved it, then my publisher found a cheaper alternative but the interface was horrible, so I convinced him the (very small) amount of money he was saving was just false economy. Luckily, he listened and we went back to Yudu, been using their stuff ever since.”
- 007** “Most advertisers are happy to have their ad run (and be linked) in the digital edition...whether they are willing to support print remains to be seen”
- 008** “Gaining subscribers!”
- 010** “Dealing with the companies that distribute the subscriptions. Some are really bad. For example, we’ve been unable to establish contact with the digital publications group at B&N since our contact there left the company a couple of years ago. We have email addresses and contacts for many people in that unit, but they are impossible to get a response from. As a result, we don’t offer subscriptions through them. We do sell single (digital) issues through B&N, but myself (and others) have noticed a significant decline since it has become apparent that they are ending the Nook line.

Honestly, I find print more annoying. We don't do newsstand or print subscriptions simply because of the outrageous costs of printing and shipping. That and bookseller returns, which can kill a publisher."

- 013** "Just the prepping part on the part of the art department. It is yet one more thing to do; it takes about a day/issue."
- 014** "The initial launch of the app was a challenge, especially the process of generating proper security certificates. The DPS documentation was good, but did have some holes. The next major challenge is selling enough subscriptions to offset DPS subscription costs."
- 015**
  - Choosing a solution that offers some of the benefits of a digital edition without adding extensively to workload/expense.
  - Finding ways to monetize the digital edition"
- 018** "Being patient. From a creative standpoint, you want to have everything all at once but it just doesn't work that way. Deciding how we want to monetize it would be number two. We have options that we have not fully explored or taken advantage of but are beginning to. There are proposals on the table, but a lot of different options for doing that. Zero pages, which is the page to the left of the cover. Full backgrounds, skyscraper ads, pop up ads, auto play video, and even just adding more pages. And then the other thing is just getting it done. When you wrap up an edition, there's so many little things to pay attention to."
- 019** "Trying to get the right amount of extra content into the digital version without devaluing content from the print version."
- 020** "None really."
- 021** "The greatest challenge was for our eMedia Art Director, who blazed the trail with the first tablet edition. She had to work out all the settings and procedures, and trouble shoot the entire process, working hand in hand with our programmers to try and get everything to work across multiple devices."
- 022** "Good question. Delivery methods mostly - I am very good designing it with Quark Xpress, but setting up a good website and for it and finding a delivery method was the hardest. I used a 3rd party download service and they were so dreadful – really really dreadful despite it being a supposed good service which cost me each month – I eventually gave in to the easy option of simply

providing a download link to readers. This is not very secure but I can live with that.

The iOS app is produced as a service from our North American paper magazine distributors. Although we have stopped providing them paper magazine for newstands in the USA and Canada, we have kept on providing them magazines to make the app from – they do not charge us for this – we get a cut of sales revenue. But the sales of the app are far less than sales of pdf downloads, and as we don't get much money from each app sale I don't activity promote it."

**023** "Being able to self publish to platforms like iTunes and Google without having to get a third party involved."